

To: [Committee, Agriculture \(REPS\)](#)
Subject: Submission re latest Qld fires
Attachments: [Fire Report.docx](#)

Hi,

I have submitted a report from a local resident to the Lowmead Rural Fire Unit (attached) to the requested "Web site". However I am not sure it's the correct inquiry.

So here are the details:

My experience at the Lowmead fire, and discussions with neighbours who assisted in the Berajondo fire – the Granite Creek fire – and here at Lowmead mirror the concerns raised by everyone with anything to do with the Deepwater National Park fire.

Before we visit the issues let me emphasise the dedication, the enthusiasm and the courage of every individual that took part in fighting these fires.

However, no amount of personal dedication and commitment can overcome a system that is set up to make the end result so difficult.

1. Parkes and Forestry in particular, but all land owners, must start managing their land responsibly. This means opportunistic control of "fuel loading" by controlled burning.
2. Local knowledge and experience must be utilised for effective management of the fire. The wisdom of this was confirmed many times during the recent events.
3. Fire units whose training and experience is putting out "house" fires are not confident when operating on marginal bush tracks and overhead undergrowth. Who expects them to be?
4. Control of this firefighting by "Fire Com" is often too remote – missing critical opportunities to utilise suitable firebreaks and local weather changes (wind direction changes etc)

Some of the issues leading to these fires were a cooler than normal summer last year – high humidity but no temp above 38^o - combined with a wet late summer that encouraged grass growth. This was followed by a warm winter generally BUT one with the most frost recorded in 30 years. Result, high dead grass just waiting to burn ferociously. As it did!!!

I am sure with the correct advice and follow up action the situation can be moderated to manageable.

The question remains: Why did we not learn from the Victorian Tragedy, where advice from the WWF not only devastated the Ledbetter Possum population it was designed to protect, but also human lives. The advice to have no firebreaks and burning back had severe consequences far beyond the feel good for the possums.

Peter Jones